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TAGS: PREL KCRM PGOV PINR KDEM UNMIK YI
SUBJECT: KOSOVO SERB HARDLINERS CALL FOR SELF DEFENSE

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. According to the OSCE, 500-700 people participated in a June 5 demonstration in Zvecan against recent acts of violence against Kosovo Serbs. Local leaders announced a resolution by the Zvecan municipal assembly to end contact with the Kosovo government until the crimes are solved and the security situation has improved. (NOTE. Interactions between the northern Kosovo Serbs and the Pristina government are extremely limited in any event. END NOTE.) UNMIK officials went to Zvecan and promised to increase security in northern Kosovo by bringing in additional Kosovo Serb police officers and international Civil Police. They also offered to bring undercover Serbian police officers already operating illegally in northern Kosovo into the Kosovo Police Service. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Head of OSCE Mitrovica Region Alastair Livingston told PolOff on June 6 that 500-700 people participated in a peaceful, half-hour demonstration on June 5 in Zvecan over three recent attacks on Serbs in that municipality. On June 1 Kosovo Serb Miljan Veskovic was shot and killed while driving on the road between Zvecan and Zitkovic; on May 11 two Kosovo Serbs were shot and injured at a gas station near Grabovac; and on May 6 a vehicle being driven by a Serb Orthodox priest was shot at near the village of Rudare.

¶3. (SBU) Mitrovica regional Kosovo Coordination Center (CCK) representative Momir Kasalovic spoke at the demonstration, along with the mayors of the three northern Serb-majority municipalities (Zvecan, Leposavic and Zubin Potok). Kasalovic told PolFSN on June 6 that the three mayors issued a joint statement announcing an immediate end to all contacts with the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG) until the perpetrators of these and other crimes are found and brought to justice.

¶4. (SBU) Speakers at the demonstration announced resolutions made during a June 2 extraordinary session of the Zvecan

municipal assembly (MA). According to an internal OSCE document, the MA resolved that the recent attacks were "terrorist acts" planned to intimidate Serbs and make them flee, "thus finalizing the seven-year ethnic cleansing of Serbs in Kosovo." According to the OSCE document, the MA said UNSC resolution 1244 allows for the return of "several hundred" Serbian police officers to Kosovo, demands that the provision be fully implemented, and says that if this does not happen, then the MA will put up vacancy notices for 999 police officers, to be paid for by the Serbian government.

(NOTE. Annex 2 to 1244 stipulates that, "an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serbian personnel will be permitted to return" to fulfill some specified functions such as clearing minefields and "maintaining a presence" at patrimonial sites.

END NOTE.) According to the OSCE, the MA authorized a committee for emergency situations to organize for the "self-defense" of Zvecan, demands that the Serbian Ministry of Interior (MUP) participate in all criminal investigations in Kosovo, and urges other Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo and the Mitrovica advisory board to take similar measures.

¶5. (SBU) Livingston said that after the demonstration UNMIK PDSRSG Steve Schook, Kosovo Police Service (KPS) Commissioner Kai Vittrup and UNMIK Department of Justice head Al Moskowitz met with Zvecan leaders in a previously scheduled meeting to discuss the security situation in the north. Livingston said they agreed to increase security by deploying additional Kosovo Serb KPS officers to the north. Livingston said Zvecan currently only has two KPS police cars, and Schook and Vittrup agreed to provide more vehicles. Livingston said they also agreed to send in up to 500 additional UN international civil police (CivPol) officers. Livingston said they reiterated the promise they made two months ago, to provide accelerated KPS training for Serbian MUP officers currently illegally operating in plain-clothes north of the Ibar River, who can be trained and re-badged as KPS officers.

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In a press statement after the meeting, Schook asked for the support of Municipal presidents to identify former Kosovo Serbian policemen who could join the KPS. Livingston said Schook and Vittrup also told local leaders that they had reason to believe at least two of the recent attacks (against the priest and at the gas station) were committed by Serbs.

¶6. (SBU) Downplaying statements made at the demonstration, moderate Kosovo Serb leader and north Mitrovica resident Oliver Ivanovic told PolOff on June 6 that the speakers are not influential and have no backing from the Belgrade government or the CCK. Ivanovic said Kasalovic cited E.O.-listed Mitrovica hard-liner Marko Jaksic (not CCK leaders in Belgrade) as the source for his statements, and Jaksic later clarified in a June 6 press statement that he wants a breaking of ties with the PISG, not with UNMIK. UNMIK Mitrovica regional representative Jerry Gallucci also played down the impact of the statements made by the northern hard-liners.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT. Kosovo Serbs in the north are frustrated by what they perceive as a deteriorating security situation. The fact that perpetrators are seldom caught allows northern radicals to label the crimes ethnically motivated, even though UN police say there is no evidence to indicate an ethnic motive behind crimes that have occurred in the Serb-controlled north. The current situation provides an opportunity for UNMIK and the KPS to fortify their presence in the north, which they should do anyway in advance of a status resolution, and to be seen to be doing so at the request of and in cooperation with local leaders. It also gives added impetus to their many attempts to bring MUP officers out of the shadows and into the KPS - a first step towards legitimizing one of Kosovo's many parallel institutions. We do not know how much Belgrade supports the initiatives announced at the demonstration, but we do know that Kasalovic has gone to Belgrade today for

"consultations." END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) Post clears this message in its entirety for release
to Special Envoy Ahtisaari.
GOLDBERG